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EAST TIMOR
CNRM
TIMOR LORO SAE
National Council of
Maubere Resistance

A Message to the Beijing Conference from the East Timorese Women

6 SEPTEMBER 1995

Dear Conference Participants,
Greetings from East Timor!

In the middle of the night amidst a great silence in Dili, I'm thinking of you all, and I imagine how many you must be, how strong you are, how free you talk to each other, and how wonderful that is! I congratulate you for what you are, and for what you achieved or will achieve in this Conference.

Nearly twenty years ago, on Dec.7th, Indonesia invaded my country East Timor, planes dropping paratroopers from the skies and boats vomiting fire and hatred from the waters of the raped East Timorese northern "female sea". We have since known war, rape, violations of the most basic human rights, a military occupation regime, oppression, imprisonment and death. We have lost more than 1/3 of our population And the list of our sorrows could go on.

As women we have gone through anything a military invasion and a military occupation machine sets up: rape, imprisonment and death. In twenty years, an untold number of women went through the horror in the Indonesian prisons all over East Timor. Many of us died of starvation and exhaustion in the mountains in the attempt to escape the Indonesian hordes; others died cremated by the napalm bombs; others shot in the battlefield; others languished in military controlled prisons until raped and executed. Many of us carry on our bodies the scars of the interminable days and nights of prison. Our men and our children went out one day to fight the Indonesians, many did not come back. Others are still fighting. Many are in hiding,carrying out clandestine duties. As wives and mothers we are worried about them all the hours of the day. We paid, and continue to pay, a heavy price for the liberation of our homeland.

The Indonesian military have done the most terrible things against us, as women and as mothers. During the most difficult days back in the late seventies and early eighties, the Indonesian military used to kill husbands and children in front of the wives and mothers and literally asked them tos mile and yell "viva Indonesia", and then bury their own husbands and children. Little unborn babies were dislodged from their pregnant mothers with a knife and in the fury of their "anti-communism" the Indonesian military would smash them against the rocks! It was and it is, and it remains the horror! We were even prohibited to cry! Would you believe it?Yes, it did happen! That is the price we paid and continue to pay for the liberation of the "land of the rising sun"!

We are taking care of our men and our children in this long. We hope in human solidarity and believe in the solidarity of the women of the world. We have survived, and for all these nearly twenty years kept the struggle alive and strong,fundamentally because there is a total national resistance to the invasion and the military occupation.

Indeed international support has been crucial.

We appeal to you, as women, as mothers, as sisters and as wives, to say a word and to act in your own countries, in all your capacities, power and strength, for the dignity and freedom of the people of East Timor, for the dignity and freedom of all the East Timorese Women. You will indeed help save East Timor from total disaster, and that is being left to the free will of the Indonesian military. If you understand what is a military dictatorship in the cultural setting of Indonesia, you understand the implications of what I'm saying.

To the Indonesian women in this Conference we appeal for courage and for dignity: Indonesia should recognise it has committed a very big mistake, the real mistake of its fifty years of independence. Twenty years out of fifty, Indonesians have been killing East Timorese, denying them the most basic human rights, chiefly among these, the right to self-determination and independence which is also recognised in the Indonesian Constitution, as a right of all the peoples of the world, including, indeed, the people of East Timor. As a great nation, that aspires to a place in the Community of the civilised nations of the world, it is time to say stop to the butchery carried out in East Timor against innocent people,whose only crime is to love their mother, East Timor. It is time to be "sources of the cool" and say to your men: respect East Timor, and the best way to do it, is to leave East Timor. It is time for Suharto to sit down with Xanana Gusmao, and solve the question of East Timor, once forever. And there will be peace, we will be good neighbours. A great nation would be able to recognise errors made and go the right way: that is to say, Indonesia should leave East Timor.

Your men, your children, your soldiers in East Timor will be doing nothing but killing innocent people, our children. In spite of the official rhetoric, that is the crude reality.Remember November 12th, 1991, the Santa Cruz massacre! The killing fields are no more in the rugged mountains alone. For us, the towns and the villages have become battlefields for freedom. For you, only killing fields everywhere! Development projects, fully controlled by the Indonesian State apparatus,Γ Any solution short of the unconditional recognition of the fundamental right of our people to self | determination and independence will be no solution. We are on the right track of the struggle for humanity, for dignity, for womanhood and for freedom. On December 7th, 1995, it will be twenty years of invasion and military occupation of East Timor by the Indonesian military.Our fight for freedom will go on as long as there is no freedom to live as free human beings, as women, as individuals, as a nation and as "ema" or people of East Timor.Suffering won't deter and discourage us on the road to freedom. Women are source of life, women are mothers and we will deliver life, we will deliver freedom and dignity.

Dear Friends, in the freedom you live in the free world, in the peace of your families, in the dignity of your work in small and big cities, don't forget East Timor, don't for get the East Timorese Women, their plight, their struggle and the struggle of the people of the "land of the rising sun", Rai Timor Loro Sae.
On behalf of the East Timorese Women

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